

# The **EDGE**

## Navigating Conflict Toolkit

September 2023

# What is a difficult conversation

- Often driven by emotions
- Has a significant consequence
- You are worried about the outcome
- It's personal to you
- It's driven by a strong belief
- Both parties want to be right
- Both parties listen to be right
- Listening is either combative or passive



# What are the root causes of conflict?

## Communication



Many conflicts result from:

- A lack of information
- Bad information
- Or no information at all!

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**Clear, concise, accurate, and timely communication** of information will help to ease both the number and severity of conflicts.

## Emotions

Oftentimes emotions can get in the way of logic and process, especially during times of stress. It's normal – we are human and have different personalities!

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However, **understanding when and why we get stressed is key** to avoid having our emotions take over.

# What are Behaviour Drivers?

This is where behaviour drivers come in. Behaviour drivers are how we've been 'programmed' in order for us to feel OK, particularly during times of stress.

**They drive how and why we do things the way we do.**

When we aren't able to fulfill the behaviour, they can cause us (and those around us) stress and anxiety. And it's this anxiety that can manifest itself in the form of some of traits that may seem 'difficult' to others.



# Behaviour drivers explained

## Be Perfect

Extremely logical, task and detail-oriented. They **will not settle until things are exactly right**. This can mean that their work is to a high standard but they often pay in anxiety and time to get it that way.

**Needs:** reassurance, organisation, acknowledgement, facts, appreciation and kindness

## Be Strong

The “be strong” driver is self-sufficient and reliable. They often like working on their own and if stressed, **won’t show emotions and instead tough it out and get on with it**.

**Needs:** praise, clear instructions, help expressing emotion, help balancing workload

## Try to Please

Usually skilled at dealing with others and like to look after people – they will often **keep everyone happy often at their own expense**. They are pleasant and helpful but tend to forget about their own needs which can lead to frustration.

**Needs:** patience, acknowledgement, help expressing opinions/desires, help saying no

## Hurry Up

Lively and enthusiastic, with a capacity for doing (and completing) lots of things at once. They have a need to finish things fast so **they rush around and barely have a minute to relax**. This can mean that their work is to a high standard but they often pay in anxiety and time to get it that way.

**Needs:** help with planning and a clear schedule of tasks, reminder to rest/relax, work balance

## Try Hard

“Try Hards” are **quick to take on lots of tasks**, often don’t complete them or set high goals which are often not achieved, but work very hard to try to. When they can’t complete something they can feel stressed and frustrated.

**Needs:** acknowledgement for following through, help with planning, stimulation to stay on track, time management

# So how can we help each other?

Empathy



Patience

Because there is no single 'right' behaviour driver  
– all drivers have positive and challenging aspects!

## Some general rules of thumb

### Help others verbalise their needs by checking in with them:

- “What’s still left to figure out?”
- “Where is your uncertainty coming from?”
- “Is there anything unclear?”
- “How can I help you?”

### Encourage sharing and interaction:

- “I’d love to hear your point of view
- “I’m really unsure about this one, what do you think?”
- “That was a great idea you had in the last meeting, let’s talk more about that.”
- Once you get someone comfortable sharing their opinion, be silent!

### Check in with yourself:

- Have you really given your team all the information they need?
- Have you properly invested time upfront to help get all questions answered?
- Are you being realistic with expectations?

# OARS – listening communication



Open Questions



Affirmation



Reflective Language



Summary

## Reflective language

It seems to me.....

It sounds like.....

It feels to me that.....

Say what you see and  
hear

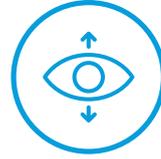
# How to have a difficult conversation



**Purpose**



**Plan**



**Perspective**



**Practice**



**Purpose**

- What is your own personal goal from the conversation, why is that important to you?
- What end result do you want to achieve?



**Plan**

The what if's

- What if they respond emotionally?
- What if they don't listen to you?
- What if they are busy?
- What if you don't get the result you want?



**Perspective**

- Look at the world through their lens
- What do you know about them
- What inferences can you draw about them
- What are they likely to say



**Practice**

- Say your opening lines out loud
- Ask a trusted friend to listen to you
- Think of a variety of ways to start the conversation

# The Window of Tolerance – Daniel Siegel



- When **we feel safe** we can respond in a logical way
- When **we are in control** we can respond in a logical way
- When we feel secure **we can process information**



- When **we are fear driven** we respond emotionally
- When **we lose control** we respond emotionally
- When we are insecure **it's hard for us to process information**

**This will affect you,  
team members and  
people you are  
dealing with**



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